THREE DOVES.

Seaward, at morn, my doves flew free
At eve they circled back to me.
The first was faith; the second, hope,
The third—the whitest—charity.

Above the plunging surge's play
Dream-like they hovered, day by day.
At last they turned, and bore to me
Green signs of peace through nightfall gray.

No shore forlorn, no loveliest land
Their gentle eyes had left unscanned,
'Mid hues of twilight-heliotrope
Or daybreak fires by heaven-breath fanned.

Quick visions of celestial grace
Hither they waft, from earth's broad space.
Kind thoughts for all humanity.
They shine with radiance from God's face.

Ah, since my heart they choose for home,
Why lose them—forth again to roam?
Yet look: they rise! With loftier scope
They wheel in flight toward Heaven's pure dome.

Fly, messengers that find no rest
Save in such toil as makes man blest!
Your home is God's immensity:
We hold you but at His behest.
—G. P. Lathrop, in N. Y. Independent.

CHAPTER XXIII.—CONTINUED.

I walked up the street and turned into the large, well-kept lawn and approached the grim, silent house. I rang at the door, then waited several minutes before anyone came. At last the door was opened and a tall, stately, firm-featured old lady, dressed throughout in black, stood before me. I spoke, and in turn she gave me a slight bow. Her manner was so distant and frigid that I was more than half inclined to turn away without stating my errand. But I summoned all my courage, and, laying my timidity aside, spoke out boldly, saying:

"This is Mrs. Lawton, I presume?"

"It is," she answered.

"Then, Mrs. Lawton," I said, "I am seeking some kind of employment that will give me shelter and a living, and I have come to apply to you."

She looked me over with great deliberation, her features retaining their cold immobility, undisturbed by even so much as a ripple either of pleasure or displeasure.

"Well," she said at last, in her slow, majestic, deliberate way, "what kind of employment do you want?"

"I want any kind that will give me a decent support," I replied.

"Then you have no preference?" she questioned.

"I am not in a position to have preferences," I answered. "With me it is not a question of what I will do, but of what I can do. Have you a need of my services in any capacity?"

She did not speak at once, but for a little while stood silently gazing into my face, a vacant, far-away look in her eyes that impressed me with the belief that she was not seeing me at all and that her thoughts were not on me. She did not answer my question, and when she spoke it was to this effect:

"Come into my room, will you? I want to talk with you a moment."

"Yes, ma'am," I replied, at the same time following her into the great hall, thence into a nicely furnished, but dark, dismal room.

She seated herself, and bade me draw a chair near her.

"Now," she began, "tell me all about yourself—your name, your parentage, your life experiences and everything."

"My name is Agnes Owens," I replied; "and my mother is dead, and my father is married again."

I said so much and stopped. I was chary of saying more to a stranger.

"So your mother is dead?" she observed, her voice a little more gentle than it had been. "Has she been dead long?"

"Since my infancy," I answered.

"Indeed? Then you have never known a mother's love?"

"Never; but I've often felt the want of it."

"It is strange," she said, musingly. "One feels the want of a mother's love, the other the want of an object to shed that love upon."

There was a short pause before she resumed, and when she spoke again it

"TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF."

appeared as if she had awakened out of a deep reverie.

"Your father is living, then?" she questioned.

"Yes, ma'am."

"Why do you not live with him?"

"Because my stepmother was very cruel to me, and I could not bear the sufferings she inflicted on me."

"Was your father cruel, too?"

"He was never kind, and he always believed what my stepmother told him."

"Yes, yes; I know how that is. I have experienced it all, but it's been a long time since, of course. But could you not remain at home and suffer less than you suffer in this friendless way of living?"

"No, ma'am; I could not remain at home at all. My stepmother ordered me to leave, and my father, who was present, did not interfere. I was driven away."

"Driven away?" Mrs. Lawton repeated, meditatively. "Cruel, heartless wretches!" Then after the lapse of a moment, she asked:

"How long have you been from home?"

"Several months," I answered.

"And how have you fared during those several months?"

"I have not been happy."

"Have the people you had dealings with been kind to you?"

"Some have and some have not."

"Where did you live before you came here?"

"I would rather not tell that, Mrs. Lawton, if you please. I have good reasons for wishing to keep it a secret."

She watched me with intense interest for a short time.

"Miss Owens," she said, directly, "I do not wish to pry into your secrets. I have no right to do so. Yet how am I to assist you unless I have your confidence? You are a stranger to me, and before I take you into my home I ought to know something of your past life."

The intimation that she was thinking of taking me into her home filled me with a thrill of the wildest joy, and instantly my heart warmed to her.

"Mrs. Lawton," I cried, "I would willingly reveal to you everything connected with my past if I felt that my safety would admit of it. Mine is a peculiar and a trying situation, and to reveal the incidents of my existence for the last month might place my happiness and my very life in jeopardy."

"I do not know what your situation is, of course," she replied, "but I can assure you that you have nothing to fear from revealing your history to me, if it is clear, as I am sure it is. If we are to be friends and companions we must have mutual confidence and trust."

From that moment I trusted Mrs. Lawton fully. I felt that no harm could possibly result to me from making her acquainted with my history from first to last. I was anxious to make the revelation to her, too, for I hated secrets, and I dreaded the possibility of being misjudged.

"Mrs. Lawton," I said, "you are a stranger to me, but I trust you. I will tell you everything."

"Very well," she answered, quietly. "I am sure you will lose nothing by it."

Then I told her all of my experiences from the time I left home, leaving out only all references to Will Hanley and Charles Cornell. I told her of the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Cornell, of the coolness of my cousin, of the warm interest of Mr. Bernard, and of his subsequent conduct, and of the slanderous reports that were put afloat by his colleagues, Miss Perkins and Mrs. Bond. She listened attentively until I had come to a finish, then, laying her hand on mine, said:

"I believe you, Agnes. I have the greatest faith in every word you have uttered."

"I am so glad you believe me," I cried, hardly restraining my tears. "I was so much afraid you would not."

"But I do. There is that in your looks and manner that forbids a doubt of your honesty and truthfulness. I liked you when I first saw you at the door, and I like you better now. I am a queer woman in most respects, Agnes, and I dare say my sudden liking for you is one of my queer freaks. People will say so, at least. But it doesn't matter, for I have little to do with people and they have little to do with me. I live my own life in my own way, and I bother no one else and ask no one to bother about me. But I will talk of that at some other time. You have had no dinner, have you?"

"No, ma'am," I replied.

"Well, then, you certainly want it now. You are to remain here three or four days, if you will."

"Three or four days?" I exclaimed, in a tone of deep disappointment. "I hoped I was to remain—" Then remembering myself, I paused and blushed in confusion.

"You hoped you were to remain longer?" Mrs. Lawton questioned.

"Yes, ma'am," I replied. "I hoped you could employ me in some way."

"I don't know about that," she said. "I am a queer, grim, unpleasant old woman, and you may find living with me unbearable. I should be glad to have you here, for I have taken a strange fancy to you, and if you care to stay you shall. But you must have a few days to decide. You must come to understand me better before you make any agreement. Remain three days and then we will talk the matter over again. Now lay aside your things and come with me to dinner."

I obeyed, and a few minutes later we sat down to a little table in a large, airy room and were served with the choicest of viands. My hostess talked little during the meal, and for the greater part of the time seemed deeply absorbed in thought. Once I glanced up to find her eyes riveted on me in a curious gaze, and the instant her eyes met mine she let them drop and a flush suffused her face.

After dinner she took me all through the house and showed me the various rooms. There was a library well supplied with books, and I expressed my admiration of it.

"Do you like books?" she asked.

"I am very fond of them," I replied.

"Then," she said, "make yourself at home here. The books will help you to get through the long, dull days.'

"Time will not drag," I answered, "if I have plenty of duties."

"You will have but one duty, and that is to get what enjoyment you can out of your stay with me. I have shown you the house, now make yourself at home in it. Three days from now we will talk this matter over again."

CHAPTER XXIV.
TWO QUIET YEARS.

The three days following my entrance into Mrs. Lawton's home were quiet, restful ones, and but for the great disappointment that hung over my life like a pall I would have been happy. Mrs. Lawton was kind and gentle in the extreme, and from morning till night she busied herself to add to my comfort. Twenty times a day she sought me out, in order to assure herself that I was well provided for in whatever the house afforded that was calculated to make my stay more pleasant.

I literally feasted on the many good books in the library, and the greater part of the three days I spent there poring over the volumes I liked best. I felt that if I could only be privileged to enjoy that library for one long, uninterrupted month, I could ask for no greater pleasure. The thought that the three days would so soon pass, and that then I must give up my easy life and the books, and take up a life of work again, made me sad, and I almost counted the precious moments as they slipped by.

I often wondered what employment Mrs. Lawton could have for me, and in my anxiety to be informed on that point I was several times very nearly tempted to ask. But I restrained my curiosity, resolving to await her own time and pleasure.

The fourth day after my arrival, as we arose from the breakfast table, Mrs. Lawton said to me:

"Come to my room, now, Agnes, and we will come to a final understanding, and decide what our relations are to be for the future."

I accompanied her, glad to know that my future was to be explained, yet feeling a little apprehension lest something should transpire to deprive me of my new home, to which I was already dearly attached. I liked Mrs. Lawton very much, and to part from her would have been a source of painful grief.

"Well, Agnes," she began, when she was seated in her own room, with me at her knees. "Are you ready to decide

"ARE YOU READY TO DECIDE?"

whether you wish to remain with me or not?"

"I decided that the first day I was here," I replied.

"And you still wish to stay?" she queried.

"Yes, ma'am," I answered, "nothing could please me better; and if you are so good as to keep me I shall try my very best to please you and perform my duties well and faithfully."

"I told you the other day," she said, "that I am a queer woman; and I suspect you have found me so. Still, you do not know me now as you will when you are here longer. Perhaps you had better take another week to decide?"

"No, ma'am," I answered. "I am ready to answer now, and delay only makes me uneasy lest you should turn me away. If you can give me employment, and are disposed to do so, please do not hesitate on my account."

"Very well," she replied. "If you are satisfied, I am, so you may consider the matter settled."

She relapsed into silence, seemingly having no more to say. I waited some time, then asked:

"Mrs. Lawton, when am I to begin my duties?"

"What duties?" she asked.

"Why, the duties you have employed me to perform."

"Ah, now, I suppose."

"Will you instruct me how to proceed?" I questioned, as she paused again.

"Why, you know that already," she replied. "All you have to do is to go on as you have the past three days, and enjoy yourself as well as you can."

"Am I to have no work?" I asked.

"No," she answered. "I have nothing for you to do."

"Then," said I, "I have no right to stay. I have no claim on your charity, and, rather than be a burden to anyone, I'd prefer to do any kind of work."

"You're not going to be a burden, Agnes," she replied; "and there's no charity in it. You want a home and a friend, and I want some one to keep me company and make my life more cheerful. We can each furnish that which the other wants, and each of us is willing to do so; and that is all there is of it. A mutual exchange, with a balance in your favor. You give more than you receive."

"No," I objected, "you cannot deceive me that way. I give nothing and receive all."

"You do not know what you give," she said. "You do not know what your presence is to me. You remember I told you I had taken a strange fancy to you? I will tell you now why:

"I once had a daughter about your age. My husband died when she was small, and from that time she was my only companion and friend. My family disowned me when I married, and treated me with such coldness that I never sought a reconciliation. So for years my child and I lived alone and apart from the world, and we came to be very near and dear to each other. All my love and thought was centered in her and all my life was devoted to her.

"But death, cruel and unfeeling, came between us and took her from me. Then I was alone, bereft of my only treasure and my heart left vacant. I had no tie on earth from that day—nothing to love and nothing to live for. My life was blank and purposeless, and as a consequence the years have dragged wearily around with a monotonous and unvarying sadness. My life has been desolate and dreary and I have found no pleasure in it.

"When I saw you the first time I thought immediately of my daughter, and from some cause I felt that you might fill her place in my heart. Not as she filled it, of course, for no one could do that, but in a great measure. You reminded me of her, though you do not resemble what she was, in the least, and I liked you. I like you yet. I have grown to like you better as I have come to be better acquainted with you.

"Now I want you to remain with me and lighten my sorrow by your presence. I am a gloomy, sad, disappointed woman, but my heart is not entirely dried up. You can bring back to it some of its youthful feeling and win from it a great deal of the love and light that have so long been shut up within. You can make me much happier than I've been for years, and I want you to stay. It is for my sake I ask it, and not for yours, for I believe all the happiness and benefit will be mine."

I stayed. I realized that, however Mrs. Lawton might be disposed to view the matter, I was giving but a poor return for the blessings she bestowed on me, and I exerted myself in every possible way to enhance her pleasure. I talked with her, read to her, and performed a thousand little services that I thought would tend to bring her a taste of enjoyment. I flattered myself with the belief that my efforts to augment her pleasure were not vain. I was certain that she grew lighter of heart, and that day by day she gained a new relish for life. Her face lost much of its rigidity, and the cold look melted out of her eyes. Sometimes she chatted quite gayly, and now andthen a soft smile played over her features.

I noted all these signs of increasing happiness with the greatest pleasure, for I loved my benefactress with my whole heart and it made me happy to see her happy. Every light or shadow that played over her face had its effect on my heart, for my sympathies were so woven into her life that I enjoyed or suffered what she did.

Two years I lived with Mrs. Lawton They were years full of quiet peace and contentment, although they failed to bring me that perfect happiness I should have known but for my disappointed love. I still remembered Will Hanley and grieved that he did not love me.

During all that two years I heard nothing of any of those I had known previously. At first I apprehended some trouble from Mr. Bernard, for I feared he would seek me out, but in time I became quite easy on that point when weeks ran into months and I heard nothing of him. By Mrs. Lawton's advice I wrote one letter to Mrs. Cornell, telling her I had left Mr. Bernard's service, and the town, and that I was comfortably situated in a distant place, but could not, for good reasons, give my address. So I had no news of the Cornells, though I often called them to mind and longed to write to them.

I am free to confess, reader, that I often felt that I was not giving the Cornells the proper treatment, by hiding away from them after their conduct to me. I thought their generosity and uniform kindness demanded my perfect confidence, and it seemed to me I was doing them a great injustice by withholding it. But Mrs. Lawton persuaded me to act as I did, urging that my safety demanded strict silence on my part, and I was willing to be governed by her. I sometimes wished to hear from Charles Cornell, and frequently I wondered what he was thinking of me, and whether or not he had married. Of course his action in this last respect could be of no interest to me, since I did not love him and had rejected his suit, yet for some cause I took an interest in it, and hoped with all my heart that he had not married.

I had made few acquaintances in my new home, and no particular friends, aside from Mrs. Lawton. We seldom had visitors—never, in fact, save an occasional call from some village matron, who came chiefly out of curiosity to see the inside of the great mansion, or in the hope of discovering food for gossip. I lived on literature, making friends of the characters in story books, and was satisfied.

But at the end of my second year in the house it was announced that we were to have a visitor. Mrs. Lawton's nephew was coming to see her, so she told me, and we made preparations to receive him. She told me nothing about her nephew, not even his name, but simply announced that on a certain day he was coming. I asked no questions, feeling little concern in the matter, and little dreaming of the great surprise there was in store for me.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Italian Patience.

An employer whose operations are on the northern edge of New York city says that English-speaking men seldom apply to him for work, and he believes that he has never received an application for work from a native American. Italians come to him in droves, and they are good natured and philosophical when employment is denied them. A dozen or more came to him one day with an interpreter. "Tell these men," he said to the interpreter, "that I cannot employ any of them." The interpreter translated the announcement, and none of the men showed any disappointment. One laughed and said something which the interpreter translated. "He says," the interpreter said, "that's all right; he likes to stand round and see your men work, and maybe by and by you have a job."

Frogs' Eggs.

Frogs' eggs are laid before they really are eggs in the true sense of the word. They are always laid under water, and when deposited are covered with a sort of thin membrane, as an envelope, so as to occupy little space. As soon as they reach the water, however, they begin to absorb the fluid very rapidly, and in a short time the eggs are contained in the center of a jelly-like envelope, like a number of globules. They are kept apart from each other by reason of their acquired rotundity, and thus escape injuring one another.—Chicago Mail.

Just the Thing.

He—How magnificently you were dressed the other night at the Bangle reception.

She—Why, do you think so? The girls thought I was dressed very plainly.

He—Um—ah! but it was so appropriate, you know.—Judge.

MILITARY POWER OF CHINA.

About 800,000 Men Available, 100,000 Being Armed With Latest Improved Rifles.

The possibilities of China as a military power have hardly been considered by the western nations. It has been vaguely realized that China might some day become a menace to any power that offended her if what may be called the "national militia" of that country should ever be turned into trained troops. A nation of 200,000,000 or 400,000,000 people should have 20,000,000 or 25,000,000 able bodied men in the prime of condition for military service. With such a force as this China would be an antagonist that no nation would attack. While the fact that China possesses this enormous mass of the raw material of soldiery has been understood, the inefficiency of the government and the absurd showing heretofore made by its armies have spread the idea that China would not have to be reckoned with as a military power in the life of any man now living. Recent reports, however, indicate that there has been a change in the Chinese armies. While no attempt has been made to develop the strength of the national militia, the regular army has been partly remodeled and made an effective force. European and American officers have been employed, western tactics have been taught, strict military discipline enforced and the equipment of the troops altered to the European style. The rearmament of the troops with the latest improved rifles is now in progress, and already a force of 100,000 men is fully equipped and ready for service.

The Chinese army is, all told, but about 600,000 men, and the larger portion of these have not yet been reached in the system of army reform. But the fact that the transformation has proceeded thus far and is still going on shows that China has realized her deficiencies and is anxious to remedy them. The fact may mean much to the world. The Chinese are good soldiers when properly trained and led. The work of Ward and Gordon in the Taiping rebellion shows that. The experience of San Francisco with the highbinders confirms the statements of Gordon that they have a desperate courage that can be turned to good account if they have confidence in their leaders. But it remains to be seen whether the government has the strength to make its army strong. Corruption and inefficiency are its ruling traits, and these are fatal to an army if they are found in the army administration. If European methods are followed China may in ten years have a disciplined force to compare with the armies of Europe. Yet, even with the progress that has been made and the greater progress that may be made in the future, China will not be feared until she proves in armed conflict that she has thrown oriental administrative and military faults behind her for the methods of the "foreign devils."—San Francisco Examiner.

IN THE SCHOOLS.

THE slow progress of the thirty female students at Yale is very discouraging. They have not learned the yell yet.

THE new electrical laboratory to be erected at Johns Hopkins will be a roomy one-story structure of corrugated iron, illuminated from the roof by large skylights.

THE official count of students at Cornell university has just been completed, showing 1,544 now in attendance. This figure is higher by 100 than at the corresponding period last year.

SOCIAL life at Vassar presents interesting phases to the 130 new students who have this year ended its freshman class and are being initiated in the various clubs and societies of the students.